

deficiency and research and development alone. We definitely need them, but they can't carry the weight of our country's energy needs.

As the ranking member of the Science Committee, I would like to focus on the science side of the bill. While I feel there is some good research and development in the science title, I am disappointed to see that ARPA-E is in there again. We just passed it as part of the Competitiveness bill on Thursday after 2 months of negotiations. The Senate passed it on Friday, and it is on its way to the President's desk.

I am as opposed to it today as part of this bill as I was on Thursday when it was a part of the other bill. I am especially troubled that this version costs billions more than the one we just passed. I still believe it is unnecessary and could divert very valuable resources away from the Office of Science.

During committee markups, I, along with several other of my Republican colleagues, offered amendments that would have improved upon the bills, but they were voted down by every Democrat on the committee. These were commonsense provisions I thought and we thought that would have ensured that our most abundant domestic source of energy, coal, would continue to be a part of the energy future as an alternative fuel.

One amendment by Mr. MCCAUL from Texas simply added coal-to-liquids refineries to a list of facilities that could be a source of carbon dioxide for the large-scale sequestration demonstrations in the carbon capture and sequestration bill.

I offered an amendment to research ways to blend coal-to-liquids fuels with biofuels in order to prolong the supply of both. This would have helped to mitigate the potential negative effects that increased biofuel development would have on our food supply and on our prices. My friends on the other side of the aisle have decided that coal is a four-letter word when, instead, they ought to be looking at it as a ticket to independence.

Our greatest generation is no longer my generation, but it is our children and our grandchildren's generation. Let's not leave them with no choice but to fight wars all over the world for energy because our leadership here continues to put forth legislation that stifles domestic production of oil and gas and shuts out coal and shuts out nuclear energy sources.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time for the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. Chairman, to follow on my previous comments and to respond to many of the comments made on the minority side, there are those on the majority side representing coal fields of this country that recognize that we must as a Nation aggressively pursue

strategies and technologies to capture and store the carbon dioxide that results from coal combustion.

There are three provisions in the natural resources title which seek to accomplish that goal. The first is a national assessment of the geological capacity for carbon storage, focusing on deep saline formations, unmineable coal seams or oil and gas reservoirs capable of accommodating industrial carbon dioxide.

The second initiative directs the Interior Department to devise a regulatory framework for conducting geological carbon sequestration activities on Federal lands. This is extremely important considering future actions this Congress may take in this area. In the event a suitable geological formation is identified on Federal lands, there currently exists no clear-cut authority to allow that activity to go forward.

The third is the biomass utilization program established by this title. One of the purposes of this program is to develop biomass utilization for energy, including through combustion with other fuels such as coal, to achieve cleaner emissions. This is especially important in our continued efforts to develop a viable coal-to-liquids industry in this country to counter imported oil. Expert studies and tests show that when coal is mixed with biomass in the coal-to-liquid production process it will produce a cleaner fuel at the tailpipe than conventional gasoline.

In conclusion, on our title VII of the Natural Resources part of this bill, I would like to highlight provisions which aim to restore the public interest in the management of our Federal oil and gas reserves.

A number of GAO and Interior Inspector General investigations made it abundantly clear to our committee that the taxpayers are not receiving a fair return for the disposition of their resources as a result of royalty underpayments, various schemes and outright fraud.

The Natural Resources Committee has been very aggressive in pursuing these matters. There is a fiduciary responsibility to the American people involved here, and if the Interior Department will not fully exercise it under this administration, then those of us in Congress on our committee will.

Provisions of this title will bolster Federal audits and provide expanded tools for requiring compliance with the payment of Federal oil and gas royalties. This is simply good government.

Our portion of this bill provides for transparency, accountability, and a fair return to the true owners of these Federal lands, the American taxpayer. No longer can we allow the American taxpayer to be ripped off, to not receive their fair share for the disposition of their resources. No longer can we allow cronyism, fraud and abuse to exist in the Department of the Interior.

I conclude by saying that the Natural Resources portion of this bill is a good bill. The underlying bill is a good bill.

I salute our Speaker, a true leader, who has addressed the concerns of many members of our caucus, who has an intimate grasp of the details of this legislation. Under Speaker PELOSI's leadership, we are advancing in this particular legislation energy independence for this country, a freeing of our reliance upon foreign, unstable sources of oil that imperil not only our national security but imperil the lives of our young men and women.

This bill helps restore that integrity and that independence. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for the underlying bill.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Chairman, I want to talk about natural gas for a few minutes. Natural gas is a major commodity product in a lot of what we do in our country. I think this chart basically shows that as the price of natural gas goes up jobs go down. We are not competitive with countries around the world on natural gas.

Look what we have done and what we continue to do in this bill. It is amazing how our major coastal States want to drive us to energy efficiency, they want to use electricity, but they don't want us to use the natural resources off their coast.

This is a map of our country. It shows all the areas in red that are off limits for natural gas exploration. So we have the States of Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont; we have the great State of California, Oregon, Washington State. Guess what? It is okay if we use natural gas, but don't get it from our Outer Continental Shelf.

What do they do in this bill? They put a big "don't get it from" the mountain States any more. So we continue to want to use electricity, we continue to want to use natural gas, but you know what, we don't want to explore for it. That is why I am concerned about this bill.

I have great friends, and I appreciate the efficiency debate. Light cars, light bulbs, it could be a little bit of help.

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But if we don't move with a renewable fuel standard, if we don't use coal in an alternative fuel standard, if we don't continue to move on ethanol, if we don't expand nuclear options and hopefully move to a hydrogen economy, we're kidding ourselves. We have to do both. To come to this floor and say that this is going to decrease our reliance on imported crude oil and this is going to make us safer is not correct.

Vote against this bill.

Ms. GIFFORDS. Mr. Chairman, we have no speakers. Would my friend from Texas please rise for a question?

Mr. HALL of Texas. If I might inquire first before I answer the gentleman from Arizona, how much time do I have remaining?